

Slapstick

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Summary: Two years after the loss of their son, Hiccup and Astrid learn how to move on and live life again.

Slapstick

Hiccup's lips twitched. He wouldn't open his eyes, not yet. He wouldn't. Nope. It's not gonna happen. He's as stubborn as a constipated pig. Not that he's seen much of those. He had had such a beautiful dream, filled with bright magnificent memories. Only they weren't really memoriesâ€”just feelings. It felt like the past, something he so longed to return to. He could still feel that happiness linger on his still smiling lips. He could still seeâ€”or feel ratherâ€”Astrid's smile.

And then the bed creaked and his eyes snapped open.

Every happy image, every good feeling disappeared, like dust when opening a long forgotten story book. He desperately tried to grab each particle, each picture of his memory but she never gave him that chance. He watched in horror as she turned her eyes on him for the briefest of moments, a dead glint shadowing her green eyes. Every morning this happensâ€”she opens a window and the dust gets sucked out by the wind.

"Good morning," Hiccup said softly, leaning towards his wife.

A small smile dances on the corners of her lipsâ€”nervous and afraid to make a full appearance. She doesn't have to feel like that. Hiccup presses his lips against hers. She indulged for a moment before pulling away. Her movements are roboticâ€”routine. He grabs for her wrist and pulls her back. "No, come here," he said his voice low.

Hiccup wrapped his arm around her waist tightly as he kissed her again. He moaned into her mouth. He hadn't done something like that

in a long time. He missed itâ€”he missed her.

Suddenly he was filled with anger and he let her go. Astrid gave him one last glance before getting off the bed. Her face was flushed, and her breathing was rapid but her eyes, they were still _dead_. She wrapped a woolen shawl that had belonged to her aunt around her shoulders and stood at the window. The gray sunlight made her blonde hair look like sand, and her skin turned blue. He wanted to see her smile. To be happy to see what he ruled, what they ruled together.

She did this every day. She never smiled.

"Astrid." He glared at her tightened shoulders. "Can I see you smile?" he asked, perhaps a little too harshly.

His wife turned her head slowly and her lips pulled back to reveal her teeth. It looked more like a grimace.

Hiccup growled in frustration and she flinched when he sprang out of the bed and towards her. His hands gripped her arms and he wanted to shake her, wanted to wake her up. "Come on Astrid. Wake up!" And then more softly, "Why don't you trust me anymore?"

"What do you mean?" she shot back with more passion than he had heard from her in the past two years. "Of course I trust you. You're my husband. I love you." Astrid had her eyes fixed on the stone floor beneath her feet. She hadn't put her slippers on yet and Hiccup noticed that her toes were reddening from the cold.

"You couldn't possibly love me. You never look at me."

Astrid blanched, her surprised eyes locking with his. "I look at you."

Hiccup let out a dark laugh and shook his head. "No you don't. For the past two years, all you've looked at is Slapstick." For some reason he got a sick satisfaction out of witnessing Astrid's sharp intake of breath at their son's name. Out of causing it.

"Stoâ€”"

"Come on," he said practically dragging her behind him. "I should have done this a long time ago."

"Done what?" There were tears streaming down her face.

He stopped for a moment and brushed them away with his thumb but he didn't answer. It wasn't until they stepped outside, their feet sliding into the snow that he spoke. It was one word, a word he had been forbidden to speak for two years. A name that caused Astrid so much pain and brought back to many memories.

"Toothless," he called. He should have done this a long time ago.

Astrid gasped beside him. "Hiccup. I'm not ready for this. Don't make me ride him."

"You need it," he said shortly, waiting for the dragon to come ambling along. It didn't take more than a minuteâ€”Toothless was always nearby. When he spotted Astrid the dragon bent his head to the ground. Hiccup wrapped his right arm around his wife's waist and he held her hand as he pulled her towards his dragon. The reason they were even together. "Touch him," he urged.

She shook her head and there were more tears on her face. Hiccup didn't bother wiping them away, he just pulled her hand to touch Toothless' nose. The dragon purred. "He misses you," he said in her ear, soothingly.

"Well, I miss Slapstick," she hissed venomously causing Toothless to back away with a dejected whimper. Her eyes widened and she looked almost ashamed. She turned to Hiccup, her mouth opening and closing like a fish.

He merely shook his head and detached himself from her. He snapped his artificial leg in place and hopped onto Toothless' saddle. "Get on," he demanded.

Astrid's eyes were still wide and she looked terrified. But he was so close, Hiccup could feel it. She wasn't dead inside anymore. She folded her arms around herself trying to keep herself from falling all over the place. "And . . . what if I don't?"

Hiccup's eyes turned to stone. "You'll pack your things and leave and never come back."

His father had stepped down when Hiccup had married. He was chief nowâ€”he could do anything. What he said became law. What he did became tradition. Who he sent away never saw Berk again. He never sent anyone into exile before and he probably didn't even mean what he said to Astrid. But somehow he knew she would leave anyway, and again somehow he knew she didn't want to. And suddenly he didn't want her to have to make that choice so he moved quickly. More quickly than he ever had before. He snatched up her arm and yelled, "GO, TOOTHLESS!"

The dragon shot into the air with a high pitched cry. Astrid shrieked much like she had the first time she rode Toothless. It had been years ago. It was also the night she fell in love with Hiccup. Her fingers dug into his ribs and he flinched. The wind was whipping at his hair and her skin turned cold.

She's blamed Toothless for the past two years. To her Toothless was the reason Slapstick was dead.

"Astrid, Slapstick is dead," he blurted out.

"Stop it!" She didn't want to face it. It had been two years and she was still afraid.

Hiccup continued as if he hadn't heard her. "One night, two years ago," he began and she kept yelling at him to shut up and she was sobbing into his back. "The three of us, you, me, and Slapstick, all went out during the night with Toothless. He took us flying, like he always did. We were happy, I loved you, you weren't afraid of Toothless, and Slapstick was alive. And then . . . then . . ." that was when Hiccup's voice began to fail him. He missed Slapstick too.

He wanted his son back _too_. "Then Slapstick . . . he
feâ€" "

Suddenly Toothless dove down towards the ocean at a startling speed. Both Hiccup and Astrid screamed as they felt their stomachs jump to their throats. The icy wind burned their skin as it rushed through their bodies and tears streamed into their hair. Astrid clung to Hiccup as he yelled over and over again for the dragon to just QUIT IT. The ocean was getting to close, to close.

To close.

Slapstick was lost somewhere in those churning waves never to be found again. He wasn't supposed to fall. They weren't supposed to lose their child.

The ocean spray was tickling their bare feet.

Suddenly Astrid's hand shot out from under Hiccups arm and touched Toothless' ear. "Toothless," she said softly, Hiccup could barely hear it over the roar of the waves. "It's okay. Please, just stop."

The dragon leveled out quickly though their legs still slammed into the sharp cold of the ocean. It stung like knives but Toothless was soaring higher and higher once again. Hiccup strained his neck to give Astrid a startled lookâ€"she looked more awake than ever. It wasn't until then that he realized that Toothless hadn't wanted to hear the story of Slapsticks death either. It was too much.

For the rest of the day, they flew through the fluffy clouds they had always loved, had always been enchanted by. And nine months later they tried again.

Astrid was okay.

Hiccup was okay.

Toothless was okay.

And their new daughter Atlas was okay as well.

End
file.